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**THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SCIENCE REVIEW**

**CONCEPTUAL MODELS AND THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS**

Graham T. Allison

*Harvard University*

The Cuban missile crisis is a seminal event. For thirteen days of October 1962, there was a higher probability that more human lives would end suddenly than ever before in history. Had the worst occurred, the death of 100 million Americans, over 100 million Russians, and millions of Europeans as well would make previous natural calamities and inhumanities appear insignificant. Given the probability of disaster— which President Kennedy estimated as "between 1 out of 3 and even”—our escape seems awesome. This essay will examine this central, if only partially thinkable, fact about our existence. That such consequences could follow from the choices and actions of national governments obliges students of government as well as participants in governance to think hard about these problems.

**Improved understanding of this crisis depends on more accurate and more precise analysis of available evidence. To contribute to these efforts is part of the purpose of this study. But here the missile crisis serves primarily as grist for a more general investigation.**

This study proceeds from the premise that marked improvement in our understanding of such events depends critically on more self-consciousness about what observers bring to the analysis. What each analyst sees and judges to be important is a function not only of the evidence about what happened but also of the "conceptual lenses" through which he looks at the evidence. The principal purpose of this essay is to explore some of the fundamental assumptions and categories employed by analysts in thinking about problems of governmental behavior, especially in foreign and military affairs.

The general argument can be summarized in three propositions:

1. Analysts think about problems of foreign and military policy in terms of largely implicit conceptual models that have significant consequences for the content of their thought.

2. Though the present product of foreign policy analysis is neither systematic nor powerful, if one carefully examines explanations produced by analysts, a number of fundamental similarities emerge. Explanations produced by particular analysts display quite regular, predictable features. This regularity reflects the analyst's assumptions about the character of puzzles, the categories in which problems should be considered, the types of evidence that are relevant, and the determinants of occurrence. The first proposition is that clusters of such related assumptions constitute basic frames of reference or conceptual models in terms of which analysts

In attempting to understand problems of foreign affairs, analysts engage in a number of related, but logically separable enterprises: (a) description, (b) explanation, (c) prediction, (d) evaluation, and (e) recommendation. This essay focuses primarily on explanation (and by implication, prediction).
both ask and answer the questions: What happened? Why did the event happen? What will happen? Such assumptions are central to the activities of explanation and prediction, for in attempting to explain a particular event, the analyst cannot simply describe the full state of the world leading up to that event. The logic of explanation requires that he single out the relevant, important determinants of the occurrence. Moreover, as the logic of prediction underscores, the analyst must summarize the various determinants as they bear on the event in question. Conceptual models both fix the mesh of the nets that the analyst drags through the material in order to explain a particular action or decision and direct him to cast his net in select ponds, at certain depths, in order to catch the fish he is after.

2. Most analysts explain (and predict) the behavior of national governments in terms of various forms of one basic conceptual model, here entitled the Rational Policy Model (Model I). In terms of this conceptual model, analysts attempt to understand happenings as the more or less purposive acts of unified national governments. For these analysts, the point of explanation is to show how the nation or government could have chosen the action in question, given the strategic problem that it faced. For example, in confronting the problem posed by the Soviet installation of missiles in Cuba, rational policy model analysts attempt to show how this was a reasonable act from the point of view of the Soviet Union, given Soviet strategic objectives.

3. Two “alternative” conceptual models, here labeled as the Organizational Process Model (Model II) and the Bureaucratic Politics Model (Model III) provide a base for improved explanation and prediction.

Although the standard frame of reference has improved useful for many purposes, there is powerful evidence that it must be supplemented, if not supplanted, by frames of reference which focus upon the large organizations and political actors involved in the policy process. Model I implies that important events have important causes, i.e., that monoliths perform large actions for big reasons, must be balanced by an appreciation of the fact (a) that monoliths are black boxes covering various gears and levers of a highly differentiated decision-making structure, and (b) that large acts are the consequences of innumerable and often conflicting decisions made by a number of distinct players, with distinct objectives but shared power over the pieces, were determining the moves as the resultant of collegial bargainings. For small acts limited to move might contribute to the loss of a black knight with no comparable gain for the black team, but with the black rook becoming the principal guardian of the “palace” on that side of the board.

The space available does not permit full development and support of such a general argument. Rather, the sections that follow simply sketch each conceptual model, articulate it as an analytic paradigm, and apply it to produce case illustrations. But each model is applied to the same event: the U.S. blockade of Cuba during the missile crisis. These “alternative explanations” of the same happening illustrate differences among the models—at work. A crisis decision, by a small group of men in the context of ultimate threat, is a case of the rational policy model par excellence. The dimensions and factors that Models II and III uncover in this same event are particularly suggestive. The concluding section of this paper sums how the three models may be related and how they can be extended to generate predictions.

Model I: Rational Policy

Rational Policy Model Illustrated

Where is the pinch of the puzzle raised by the New York Times over Soviet deployment of an antiballistic missile system? The question, as the even is stated, concerns the Soviet Union’s decision in allocating such large sums of money for this weapon system while at the same time seeming to pursue a policy of increasing détente. In former President Johnson’s words, “the paradox is that this [Soviet antiballistic missile system] should be happening at a time when there is abundant evidence that our mutual antagonism is beginning to ease.” This question troubles people primarily because Soviet antiballistic missile deployment and evidence of Soviet actions towards détente, when juxtaposed in our implicit model, produce a question. With reference to what objective could the Soviet government have rationally chosen the simultaneous pursuit of these two courses of actions? This question arises only as the analyst attempts to structure events as purposive choices of consistent actors.

For further development and support of these arguments see the author’s larger study, Durumce and Policy: Conceptual Models and the Cuban Missile Crisis (forthcoming). In its abbrevitated form, the argument must, at some points, appear overly stark. The limits of space have forced premature omissions of many reservations and refinements.

Each of the three “case snapshots” displays the work of a conceptual model as it is applied to explain the U.S. blockade of Cuba. But these three cuts are primarily exercises in hypothesis generation, rather than hypothesis testing. Especially when separated from the larger study, these accounts may be misleading. The sources for these accounts include the full public record plus a large number of interviews with participants in the crisis.
How do analysts attempt to explain the Soviet emplacement of missiles in Cuba? The most widely cited explanation of this occurrence has been provided by two RAND Sovietologists, Arnold Horelick and Myron Rush, Strategic Power and Soviet Foreign Policy (Chicago, 1965). Based on A. Horelick, "The Cuban Missile Crisis: An Analysis of Soviet Calculations and Behavior," The State of War (New York, 1965), p. 189. Arnold Horelick and Rush, Strategic Power and Soviet Foreign Policy, p. 185.


Ibid., p. 192.

Ibid., p. 6.

The larger study examines several exceptions to this generalization. Sidney Verba's excellent essay "Assumptions of Non-Rationality in Models of the International System" is less than it is an approach to a somewhat different problem. Verba focuses upon models of rationality and irrationality of individual statesmen: in Knorr and Verba, The International System.

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"stable balance" where no matter who strikes first, each has an assured capability to retaliate with unacceptable damage, no rational agent would choose such a course of action (since that would mean admitting to choosing mutually destructive strategies). Whereas most contemporary strategic thinking is driven implicitly by the motor upon which this calculation depends, Schelling explicitly recognizes that strategic thinking must in some way incorporate a theory of rational behavior—just of intelligent behavior, but of behavior motivated by conscious calculation of advantages, calculation that in turn is based on an explicit and internally consistent value system.

What is striking about these examples from the literature of foreign policy and international relations are the similarities among analyses of various styles when they are called upon to produce explanations. Each assumes that what must be explained is an action, i.e., the realization of some purpose or intention. Each assumes that the actor is the national government. Each assumes that the action is a rationally valid response to a strategic problem. For each, explanation consists of showing what goal the government had in mind and how this action was a reasonable choice, given the nation's objectives. This set of assumptions characterizes the rational policy model. The assumption that Model 1 is the standard frame of reference implies no denial of the differences among the interests of Sovietologists, diplomatic historians, international relations theorists, and strategists. Indeed, in most respects, differences among the work of Hans Morgenthau, Stanley Hoffmann, and Thomas Schelling could not be more pointed. Appreciation of the extent to which each relies predominately on Model 1, however, reveals basic similarities among Morgenthau's method of "rational remanent," Hoffmann's "imaginative reconstruction," and Schelling's "vicarious problem solving," family resemblances among Morgenthau, Hoffmann's "rational actor," Hoffmann's "rational player," and Schelling's "game theorist.

Most contemporary analysts (as well as laymen) proceed predominately—albeit most often implicitly—on the terms of this model when attempting to explain happenings in foreign affairs. Indeed, that occurrences in foreign affairs are the acts of nation seems so fundamental to thinking about such problems that this underlying model has rarely been recognized: to explain an occurrence in foreign policy simply means to show how the government could have rationally chosen that act. These brief examples illustrate five uses of the model. To prove the most analysts think largely in terms of the rational policy model is not possible. In this limited space it is not even possible to illustrate the model itself. The framework. Rather, my purpose is to convey to the reader a grasp of the model and a challenge: let the reader examine the literature with which he is most familiar and make his judgment.

The general characterization can be sharpened by articulating the rational policy model as an "analytic paradigm" in the technical sense developed by Robert K. Merton for sociological analysis. Systematic statement of basic assumptions, concepts, and propositions employed by Model 1 analysts highlights the distinctive thrust of this style of analysis. To articulate a largely implicit framework is of necessity to caricature. But caricature can be instructive.

RATIONAL POLICY PARADIGM

I. Basic Unit of Analysis: Policy as National Choice

Happenings in foreign affairs are conceived as actions chosen by the nation or national leader. See Morgenthau, op. cit., p. 5; Hoffmann, Contemporary Theory, pp. 178-179; Hoffmann, "Roulette in the Cellar," The State of War; Schelling, op. cit.

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II. Organizing Concepts

A. National Actor. The nation or government, conceived as a rational, unitary decision-maker, is the agent. This actor has one set of specified goals (the equivalent of a consistent utility function), one set of perceived options, and a single estimate of the consequences that follow from each alternative.

B. The Problem. Action is chosen in response to the strategic problem which the nation faces. Threats and opportunities arising in the "international strategic market place" move the nation to act.

C. Static Selection. The sum of activity of representatives of the government relevant to a problem constitutes what the nation has chosen as its "solution." Thus the action is conceived as a steady-state choice among alternative outcomes (rather than, for example, a large number of partial choices in a dynamic stream).

D. Action as Rational Choice. The components include:

1. Goals and Objectives. National security and national interests are the principal categories in terms of which the analyst perceives what is to be explained.

2. Options. Various courses of action relevant to a strategic problem provide the spectrum of choices.

3. Consequences. Enactment of each alternative course of action will produce a series of consequences. The relevant consequences constitute benefits and costs in terms of strategic goals and objectives.

4. Choice. Rational choice is value-maximising. The rational agent selects the alternative whose consequences rank highest in terms of his goals and objectives.

III. Dominant Inference Pattern

This paradigm leads analysts to rely on the following pattern of inference: if a nation performed a particular action, that nation must have had goals towards which the action constituted an optimal means. The rational policy model's explanatory power stems from this pattern. Pursealment is relieved by re-vesting the purposive pattern within which the occurrence can be located as a value-maximising means.

IV. General Propositions

The distinctive feature of political science is the frequency with which propositions of any generality are formulated and tested. "Paradigmatic analysis" argues for explicitness about the terms in which analysis proceeds, and seriousness about the ends to which explicitness contributes. The kind of propositions which analysts who employ this model rely, the formulation includes:

1. The basic assumption of value-maximising behavior produces propositions central to most explanations. The general principle can be formulated as follows: the likelihood of any particular action results from a combination of the nation's (1) relevant values and objectives, (2) perceived alternative courses of action, (3) estimates of various sets of consequences (which will follow from each alternative), and (4) net valuation of each set of consequences. This yardstick of probability is used in explicit paradigm.

A. An increase in the cost of an alternative, i.e., a reduction in the value of the set of consequences which will follow from that action, or a reduction in the probability of attaining fixed consequences, increases the likelihood of that alternative being chosen.

B. A decrease in the costs of an alternative, i.e., an increase in the value of the set of consequences which will follow from that alternative, or a reduction in the probability of attaining fixed consequences, increases the likelihood of that action being chosen.

"This model is an analogue of the theory of the rational entrepreneur which has been developed extensively in economic theories of the firm and the consumer. These two propositions specify the "substitution effect." Reformulation of this model and his choice in a particular situation, leading analysts to further constrain the goals, alternatives, and consequences considered. Thus, (1) national propensities or personality traits are reflected in an "operational code," (2) concern with certain objectives, or (3) special principles of action, narrow the "goals" or "alternatives" or "consequences" of the model. For example, the Soviet deployment of ABM's is sometimes explained by reference to the Soviet's "defense-mindedness." Or a particular Soviet action is explained as an instance of a special rule regarding the deployment of the Borei class submarines."

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randomness is created. Thus, having employed other assumptions and categories in deriving an explanation or prediction, analysts will present their product in a neat, convincing rational policy model package. (This accommodation is a favor of members of the intelligence community whose association with the details of a process is considerable, but who feel that by putting an occurrence in a larger rational framework, it will be more comprehensible to their audience."

Pough, in attempting to offer an explanation—particularly in cases where a prediction derived from the basic model has failed—the notion of a "mistake" is invoked. Thus, the failure in the prediction of a "missile gap" is written off as a Soviet mistake in not taking advantage of their opportunity. Both these and other modifications permit Model I analysts considerably more variety than the paradigm might suggest. But such accommodations are essentially appendages to the basic logic of these analyses.

The U.S. Blockade of Cuba: A First Cut

The U.S. response to the Soviet Union's placement of missiles in Cuba must be understood in strategic terms as simple value-maximizing escalation. American nuclear superiority could be counted on to paralyze Soviet nuclear power; Soviet transgression of the nuclear threshold in response to American use of lower levels of violence would be wildly irrational since it would mean virtual destruction of the Soviet Communist system and Russian national since it would mean a nuclear war.

The naval blockade—euphemistically named a "shot" presentll, without editorial commentary, a straightforward explanation of the U.S. block-ade. The purpose is to illustrate a strong, characteristic rational policy model account. This account is (roughly) consistent with prevailing explanations of these events.

National Security Council and directed them to "set aside all other tasks to make a prompt and intense survey of the dangers and all possible courses of action." This group functioned "after the President and not different departments." As one of the participants recalls, "The remarkable aspect of those meetings was a sense of complete equality." Most of the time during the week the participants were able to examine all the possible tracks and weighing the arguments for and against each. Six major categories of action were considered.

1. Do nothing. U.S. vulnerability to Soviet missiles was no new thing. Since the U.S. already lived under the gun of missiles based in Russia, a Soviet capability to strike from Cuba too made little real difference. The real danger stemmed from the possibility of U.S. over-reac-

The U.S. should announce the Soviet action in a calm, casual manner thereby deflating whatever political capital Khrushchev hoped to make of the missiles.

This argument fails on two counts. First, it grossly underestimates the military important of the Soviet move. Not only would the Soviet Union's missile capability be doubled and the U.S. early warning system be overwhelmed, but the United States would have an opportunity to re-

verses the strategic balance by further installations, and indeed, in the longer run, to invest in cheaper, shorter-range missiles that may expand the U.S. missile gap and be operational long before the missiles in Cuba.

A second, the political importance of this move was undeniable. The Soviet Union's act challenged the American President's most solemn warning. If the U.S. failed to bring about an American commitment would be credible.

2. Diplomatic pressure. Several forms were considered: an appeal to the U.N. or O.A.S. for an inspection team, a secret approach to Khrushchev, and a direct approach to Khrus-

hchev, perhaps at a summit meeting. The United States would demand that the missiles be re-

moved, but the final settlement might include the neutralization of Cuba, U.S. withdrawal from the Guatamalana base, and withdrawal of U.S. Jupiter missiles from Turkey or Italy.

Each form of the diplomatic approach had its own drawbacks. To arrange the Soviet Union to become an active participant in the resolution of the U.S. block-ade. The purpose is to illustrate a strong, characteristic rational policy model account. This account is (roughly) consistent with prevailing explanations of these events.

"As stated in the introduction, this "case snapshot" presents, without editorial commentary, a Model I explanation of the U.S. block-ade. The purpose is to illustrate a strong, characteristic rational policy model account. This account is (roughly) consistent with prevailing explanations of these events.


2. Ibid., p. 126.
A blockade offered the Soviet Union a special opportunity of deploying tactics with which to buy time to complete the missile installations. Was a fait accompli not required?

In spite of these enormous difficulties the blockade had comparative advantages: (1) It was a middle course between inaction and attack, aggressive enough to communicate firmness of intention, but nevertheless not so precipitous as a strike. (2) It placed the Kennedy administration in a position of choosing the next step. He could avoid a direct military clash by keeping his ships away. His was the last clear chance. (3) No possible military confrontation could be more acceptable to the U.S. than a naval engagement in the Caribbean. (4) This move permitted the U.S., by flexing its conventional muscle, to exploit the threat of subsequent non-nuclear steps in each of which the U.S. would have significant superiority.

Particular arguments about advantages and disadvantages were powerful. The explanation of the American choice of the blockade lies in a more general principle, however. As President Kennedy stated in drawing the moral of the crisis:

"The blockade was the United States' only real option."

II. Organizational Process

For some purposes, governmental behavior can be usefully summarized as action chosen by a unitary, rational decisionmaker: centrally controlled, completely informed, and value maximizing. But this simplification must not be allowed to conceal the fact that a "government" consists of a conglomerate of semi-feudal, loosely allied organizations, each with a substantial life of its own. Government leaders do sit on top of which government leaders sit. Governments perform routines. Government leaders can trim the edges of this output and exercise some choice in combining outputs. But the mass of behavior is determined by previously established procedures. Second, existing organizational routines make it difficult for existing organizational routines to be replaced. Third, the implementation of organizational output is not a question of decision, but of execution. As Theodore Sorensen has observed: "Presidents rarely, if ever, make decisions—particularly in foreign affairs—in the name of the American people."

The influence of organizational studies upon the present literature of foreign affairs is minimal. Specialists in international politics are not students of organization theory. Organization theory has only recently begun to study organizations as decisionmakers and has not yet produced behavioral studies of national security organisations from a decision-making perspective. It seems unlikely, however, that those gaps will remain unfilled much longer. Considerable progress has been made in the study of the behavior of formal organizations. Scholars have begun applying these insights to government organizations, and interest in an organizational perspective is spreading among institutions and individuals concerned with actual government operations. The "decisionmaking" approach represented by Richard Snyder, B. Bruck, and B. Sopena, Foreign Policy Decision-Making (Glencoe, Illinois, 1963), incorporates a number of insights from computer simulation models. The formulation of this paradigm is indebted both to the orientation and insights of Herbert Simon and to the behavioral model of the firm stated by Richard Cyert and James March, A Behavioral Theory of the Firm (Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1963). Here, however, one is forced to grapple with the less routine, less quantified functions of the less differentiated elements in government organizations.


"Organizations are not monolithic. The proper level of disaggregation depends upon the objectives of the analysis. This paradigm is formulated with reference to the major organizations that constitute the U.S. government. Generalization to the major components of each department and agency should be relatively straightforward."

III. Organizing Concepts

A. Organizational Actors. The actor is not a monolithic "nation" or "government" but rather a constellation of loosely allied organizations on top of which government leaders sit. This constellation acts only as component organizations—the formal chains of the leaders is frequently anti-climactic.
sign affairs requires that problems be cut up and parcelled out to various organizations. To avoid paralysis, primary power must accompany primary responsibility. But if organizations are permitted to do anything, a large part of what they will do will be determined within the organization. Thus each organization perceives problems, processes information, and performs a range of actions in quasi-independence (within broad guidelines of national policy). Factored problem solving, fractionalised power are two sides of the same coin. Factoring permits more specialized attention to particular facets of problems than would be possible if government leaders tried to cope with these problems by themselves. But this additional attention must be paid for in the coin of discretion for what an organization attends to, and how organizational responses are programmed.

C. Parochial Priorities, Perceptions, and Issues. Primary responsibility for a narrow set of problems encourages organizational parochialism. These tendencies are enhanced by a number of additional factors: (1) selective information and attention, (2) recruitment of personnel into the organization, (3) tenure of individuals in the organization, (4) small group pressures within the organization, and (5) distribution of organizational power. Each small group or clique within the organization tends to operate as an independent, relatively closed system. Thus organizations develop relatively stable preferences concerning operational priorities, perceptions, and actions as organisational output. The predominant feature of organizational activity is its programmed character: the extent to which behavior in any particular case is an enactment of pre-established routines. In the output of people, the activity of each organization is characterised by:

1. Goals: Constraints Defining Acceptable Performance. The operational goals of an organization are seldom revealed by formal pronouncements. Rather, each organization's operational goals emerge as a set of constraints defining acceptable performance. Central among these constraints is organizational output, defined usually in terms of bodies assigned and dollars appropriated. The set of constraints emerges from a mix of expectations and demands of other organizations in the government, statutory authorities, demands from citizens and special interest groups, and bargaining within the organization. These constraints represent a quasi-resolution of conflict—the constraints are relatively stable, but there is some resolution. But conflict among alternative goals is always latent; hence, it is a quasi-resolution. Typically, the constraints are formulated as imperatives to avoid roughly specified discomforts and disasters.

2. Sequential Attention to Goals. The existence of conflict among operational constraints is resolved by the device of sequential attention. As a problem arises, another cluster of subunits deals with it, focusing on a different set of constraints and the constraints they take to be most important. When the next problem arises, another cluster of subunits deals with it. Thus attention can be transferred from one problem to another in a manner analogous to changing the coin of discretion for the same sword. Factoring permits more specialized attention to particular facets of problems than would be possible if government leaders tried to cope with these problems by themselves. But this additional attention must be paid for in the coin of discretion for what an organization attends to, and how organizational responses are programmed.

3. Standard Operating Procedures. Organizations perform their "higher" functions, such as attending to problem areas, monitoring information, and preparing relevant responses for likely contingencies, by doing "lower" tasks, for example, preparing budgets, producing reports, and developing hardware. Reliable performance of these tasks requires standard operating procedures (hereafter SOPs). Since SOPs are "standard" and "operating," it should be possible to get them quickly or easily. Without these standard procedures, it would not be possible to perform certain concerted tasks. But because of standard procedures, organizational members can perform a similar function, for example, the rules of the "permeating status quo" which President Kennedy referred to in the missile crisis. Where the international environment cannot be negotiated, organizations deal with remaining uncertainties by establishing a set of standard scenarios that constitute the contingencies for which they prepare. For example, the standard scenario for Tactical Air Command (TAC) involves combat with enemy aircraft. Plans are designed and pilots trained to meet this problem. That these preparations are less relevant to more probable contingencies, e.g., provision of close-in ground fire to prop up a situation like Vietnam, has had little impact on the scenario.

4. Programmes and Repertoires. Organizations must be capable of performing actions in which the numbers of individuals is carefully coordinated. Assured performance requires clusters of rehearsed SOPs for producing specific actions, e.g., fighting enemy units or answering an embassy's cable. Each cluster constitutes a "program" (in the terms both of drama and computers) which the organization has available for dealing with a situation. The list of programs relevant to an activity, e.g., fighting, constitutes an organizational repertoire. The number of programs in a repertoire is always quite limited. When properly triggered, organizations execute programs; programs cannot be substantially changed in a particular situation. Thus learning to cope with greater the number of individuals involved, the more important are programs and repertoires as determinants of organizational behavior.

5. Uncertainty Avoidance. Organizations do not attempt to estimate the probability distribution of future occurrences. Rather, organizations avoid uncertainty. By arranging a negotiated environment, organizations regularize the reactions of other actors with whom they have to deal. The primary environment, relations with other organizations that comprise the environment, is stabilized by such arrangements as agreed budgetary limits, accepted areas of responsibility, and established conventional practices. The secondary environment, relations with the international environment, is stabilized by the establishment of contracts (alliances) and "club relations" (U.S. State and U.K. Foreign Office or U.S. Treasury and U.K. Treasury). Between enemies, contracts and conventional practices perform a similar function, for example, the rules of the "permeating status quo" which President Kennedy referred to in the missile crisis. Where the international environment cannot be negotiated, organizations deal with remaining uncertainties by establishing a set of standard scenarios that constitute the contingencies for which they prepare. For example, the standard scenario for Tactical Air Command involves combat with enemy aircraft. Plans are designed and pilots trained to meet this problem. That these preparations are less relevant to more probable contingencies, e.g., provision of close-in ground fire to prop up a situation like Vietnam, has had little impact on the scenario.

6. Program Direct Search. Where situations cannot be construed as standard, organizations engage in search. The style of search and the solution to the complex problems such as the search for alternative courses of action is problem-oriented: it focuses on the atypical discomfort that must be avoided. It is simple-minded: the neighborhood of the symptom is searched first; then, the neighborhood of the current alternative. Patterns of search reveal biases which in turn reflect such factors as specialized training or experience and patterns of communication.

7. Organizational Learning and Change. The parameters of organizational behavior mostly persist. In response to non-standard problems, organizations search and routines evolve. But the learning that occurs is often headlong into the unknown. The number of programs in a repertoire is always quite limited. When properly triggered, organizations execute programs; programs cannot be substantially changed in a particular situation. Thus learning to cope with greater the number of individuals involved, the more important are programs and repertoires as determinants of organizational behavior.

The stability of these constraints is dependent on such factors as rules for promotion and reward, budgeting and accounting procedures, and mundane operating procedures.
But the Treasury is not to be compared with the State Department. You should go through the experience of trying to get any changes in the thinking, policy, and action of the career diplomats and then you'd know what a real problem was. But the Treasury and the State Department put together are nothing compared with the Navy. To change anything in the Na-vers is like punching a feather bed. You punch it with your right and you punch it with your left until you are finally exhausted, and then you find the damn bed just as it was before you started punching."

John Kennedy’s experience seems to have been similar: “The State Department,” he asserted, “is a bowl full of jelly...” And lest the McNamara revolution in the Defense Department seem too striking a counter-example, the Navy’s recent rejection of McNamara’s major intervention in Naval weapons procurement, the F-111B, should be studied as an antidote.

F. Decisions of Government Leaders. Organizational persistence does not exclude shifts in governmental behavior. For government leaders at the top the conglomerate of organizations. Many of the characteristics of governmental behavior require that these leaders decide what organizations will play out which programs where. Thus stability in the parochialisms and SOPs of individual organizations is consistent with some important changes in the behavior of governments. The range of these shifts is defined by existing organizational programs.

III. Dominant Inference Pattern

If a nation performs an action of this type today, its organizational components must yesterday have been performing (or have had established routines for performing) an action only marginally different from that with the Na-vers. At a specific point in time, a government consists of an established conglomerate of organizations, each with existing goals, programs, and repertoires. The characteristics of a government’s action in any instances following from these established routines, and from the choice of government leaders — on the basis of information and estimates provided by existing routines — among existing programs. The best explanation of an organization’s behavior is: B = G x T x F. B indicates the prediction of the behavior of the organization. The Na-vers’ explanatory power is achieved by uncovering the organizational routines and repertoires that produced the outputs that comprise the puzzling occurrence.


IV. General Propositions

A number of general propositions have been stated above. In order to illustrate clearly the type of proposition employed by Model II analysts, this section formulates several more precisely.

A. Organizational Action. Activity according to SOPs and programs does not constitute far-sighted, flexible adaptation to “the issue” (as it is conceived by the analyst). Detailed and precise actions by organizations are determined predominantly by organizational routines, not government leaders’ directions.

1. SOPs constitute routines for dealing with standard situations. Routines allow large numbers of ordinary individuals to deal with numerous instances, day after day, without trouble, by responding to basic stimuli. But this regularized capability for adequate performance is purchased at the price of standardization. If the SOPs are appropriate, a routine’s performance, i.e., performance averaged over the range of cases, is better than it would be if each instance were approached individually (given identical talent, timing, and resource constraints). But this regularized capability for adequate performance, i.e., performance averaged over the range of cases, is better than it could be if each instance were approached individually (given identical talent, timing, and resource constraints). Therefore, the routine instances do not have “standard” characteristics, are often handled sluggishly or inappropriately.

2. A program, i.e., a complex action chosen from a short list of programs in a repertoire, is rarely tailored to the specific situation in which it is executed. Rather, the program is (at best) the most appropriate of the programs in a previously developed repertoire.

3. Since repertoires are developed by parochial organizations for standard scenarios defined by that organization, programs available for dealing with a particular situation are often ill-fitted. This is particularly true when the instances are those that are expected to have “standard” characteristics, are often handled sluggishly or inappropriately.

B. Limited Flexibility and Incremental Change. Major lines of organizational action are standard, i.e., behavior at one time is marginally different from that behavior at t-1. Simple-minded, in this context, means that behavior at t-1 will be marginally different from behavior at the present time.

1. Organizational budgets change incrementally, both with respect to data and with respect to intra-organizational splits. The organizations that could divide the money available each year by carving up the pie anew (in the light of changes in objectives or environments) in practice, organizations take last year’s budget as a base and adjust incrementally. Predictions that require large budgetary shifts in a single year between organizations or between units within an organization should be hedged.

2. Once undertaken, an organizational increment is not dropped at the point where “objective” costs outweigh benefits. Organizational goals in adopted projects carry them quite beyond the loss point.

C. Administrative Feasibility. Adequate explanation, analysis, and prediction must include administrative feasibility, i.e., a model of organizational behavior that is concerned with organizational efficiency and modal patterns of decision making. To Eastern Germany—which will influence the face of the issue seen by Soviet leaders at the outbreak of hostilities and the manner in which choice is implemented—are as critical as the question of the likely response of the Eastern European leader. The model of organizational behavior that is concerned with modal patterns of decision making and organizational efficiency is consistent with some important shifts in governmental behavior. The model of organizational behavior that is concerned with organizational efficiency and modal patterns of decision making is consistent with some important shifts in governmental behavior. A number of general propositions have been stated above. In order to illustrate clearly the type of proposition employed by Model II analysts, this section formulates several more precisely.

1. Organizations are blunt instruments. Projects that demand high degrees of precision and coordination are not likely to succeed.

2. Projects that demand that existing organizational units depart from their accustomed functions and perform previously unprogrammed tasks are rarely accomplished in their designed form.

3. Government leaders can expect that each organization will do its “part” in terms of what the organization knows how to do.

4. Government leaders can expect incomplete and distorted information from each organization concerning its part of the problem.

5. With two points, the question is whether the program is merely new to the existing goals of an organization, resistance to implementation of that piece will be encountered.

V. Specific Propositions.

1. Deterrence. The probability of nuclear attack is less sensitive to balance and imbalance, or stability and instability (as these concepts are employed by Model I strategists) than it is to a number of organizational factors. Except for the special case in which the Soviet Union acquires a credible capability to destroy the U.S. with a disarming blow, U.S. superiority or inferiority affects the probability of a nuclear attack less than do a number of organizational factors.

First, if a nuclear attack occurs, it will result from organizational activity: the firing of rockets by members of a missile group. The enemy’s control system, i.e., physical mechanisms and standard procedures which determine who can launch rockets when, is critical. Second, the enemy’s programs for bringing his strategic forces to alert status determine probabilities of accidental firing and momentum. At the outbreak of World War I, if the Russian Tsar had under­stood the organizational processes which his order of full mobilization triggered, he would have realized that he had chosen war. Third, orga­nizational repertoires fix the range of effective choice open to enemy leaders. The menu available to Tsar Nicholas in 1914 has two entrees: full mobilization and no mobilization. Partial mobilization was not an organizational option. Fourth, since organizational routines set the checkboard, the training and deployment of troops and nuclear forces is crucial, given that the outbreak of hostilities in Berlin is more probable than most scenarios for nuclear war, facts about deployment, training, and tactical decisions are inordinately significant. To Eastern Germany—which will influence the face of the issue seen by Soviet leaders at the outbreak of hostilities and the manner in which choice is implemented—are as critical as the question of the likely response of the Eastern European leader.

2. Soviet Force Posture. Soviet force posture, i.e., the fact that certain weapons rather than others are procured and deployed, is determined by organizational factors such as the goals and procedures of existing military services and the goals and processes of research and design labs, within budgetary constraints that emerge from the government leader’s choices. The frailty of the Soviet Air Force within the Soviet military establishment seems to have been a crucial element in the Soviet failure to acquire a large bomber force in the 1950s (thereby faulting American intelligence predictions of a “bomber gap” that persisted until 1960) in the Soviet Union by the Soviet Ground Forces, whose goals and procedures affected no interest in an intercontinental mission, was not irrelevant to the slow Soviet buildup of ICBMs, nor the U.S., therefore, misjudging U.S. intelligence predictions of a “missile gap”). These organizational factors (Soviet Ground Forces’ control of missiles and that service’s fixation with European scenarios) make the Soviet deployment of many MRBMs that European targets could be destroyed three times over, more understandable. Recent weapon developments, e.g., the testing of a Fracial Orbital Bombardment System (FOBS) and multiple warheads for the SS-9, very likely reflect the activity and interests of a cluster of Soviet research and development organizations, rather than a decision by Soviet leaders to acquire a first strike weapon system. Careful attention to the organizational components of the Soviet military establishment (Strategic Rocket Forces, Navy, Air Force, Ground Forces, and National Air Defense), the treatment of standard weapons programs which each component is wedded (an independent system assists survival as an independent service), and existing budgetary splits (which probably are relatively stable in the Soviet Union as they tend to be everywhere) offer potential improvements in medium and longer term predictions.

The U.S. Blockade of Cuba: A Second Cut

Organizational Intelligence. At 7:00 P.M. on...
October 22, 1962, President Kennedy disclosed the American discovery of the presence of Soviet strategic missiles in Cuba, declared a "strict quarantine on all offensive military equipment under shipment to Cuba," and demanded that "Chairman Khrushchev halt and eliminate this clandestine, reckless, and provocative threat to world peace." This decision was reached at the pinnacle of the U.S. Government after a critical week of deliberation. What initiated that process were photographs of Soviet missile sites in Cuba taken on October 14. These pictures might not have been taken until a week later. In that case, the President speculated, "I don't think probably we would have chosen as proudly as we finally did." Upon U.S. leaders might have received this information three weeks earlier—if a U-2 had flown over San Cristobal in the last week of September. What determined the context in which American leaders came to choose the blockade was the discovery of missiles on October 14.

There has been considerable debate over alleged American "intelligence failures" in the Cuban missile crisis, but what most American admirers of the American intelligence chiefs who predicted that the Soviet Union would not introduce offensive missiles into Cuba made a reasonable and defensible judgment. A Moreover, in the light of the fact that these organizations were gathering intelligence not only about Cuba but about potential occurrences in all parts of the world, the informational base available to the estimators involved nothing out of the ordinary. Nor, from an organizational perspective, is there anything startling about the gradual accumulation of evidence that led to the formulation of the hypothesis that the Soviets were installing missiles in Cuba and the decision on October 4 to direct a special flight over western Cuba.

The ten-day delay between that decision and the flight is another organizational story. At the October 4 meeting of the Defense Department, the President had made it clear that the United States would not take up arms until it could assert a "surgical" air strike. The majority of the members of the ExCom, including the President, initially preferred the air strike. The President wanted to two: an air strike and a blockade. The choice of the blockade instead of the air strike turned on two points: (1) the argument from morality and tradition that the United States could not perpetrate a "Pearl Harbor in reverse"; (2) the belief that a "surgical" air strike was impossible. Whether the United States might strike first was a question of capability, not of morality. Whether the United States could perform the surgical strike was a factual question concerning capabilities. The majority of the members of the ExCom, including the President, initially preferred the air strike. What effectively foreclosed this option, however, was the fact that the air strike they wanted could not be chosen with high confidence of success. After having tentatively chosen the "air" option, the President decided on October 9 a flight plan over San Cristobal was approved by COMOR, but to the CIA's dismay, Air Force pilots had not been assigned to the mission. At this point details become sketchy, but several members of the intelligence community have speculated that an Air Force pilot in an Air Force U-2 aircraft was turned down, as a result of which Air Force pilots were trained to fly CIA U-2's. A successful overnight took place on October 14.

This ten-day delay constitutes some form of "failure." In the face of well-founded suspicions concerning offensive Soviet missiles in Cuba that posed a critical threat to the United States' most vital interest, squabbling between organizations whose job it is to produce this information seems entirely inappropriate. But for each organization that was assigned a "critical" task, the question involved the issue: "Whose job was it to be?" Moreover, the issue was not simply, which organization would control U-2 flights over Cuba, but rather the broader issue of ownership of U-2 intelligence—-a very long-standing territorial dispute. Thus though this delay was in one sense a "failure," it was also a nearly inevitable consequence of two facts: many jobs do not fall neatly into precisely defined organizational jurisdictions; and vigorous organizations are imperi-
and detailed plans for military air strikes specified an instructive incident. On Tuesday the British Ambassador, Ormrod-Care, after having attended a briefing on the details of the blockade, suggested to the President that the plan for intercepting Soviet ships far out of reach in the Northern Atlantic be abandoned. "Air Force planners have decided that in closer to the Cuban coast it is better to decider why not make the interception much closer to Cuba and thus give the Russian leader more time? According to the public account and the recollection of a number of individual persons involved, Kennedy "agreed immediately," called McNamara, and over emotional protest, issued the appropriate instructions. 

As Sorensen records, "in a sharp clash with the Navy, he made certain his will prevailed." The Navy's plan for the blockade was thus changed by drawing the blockade much closer to Cuba. A serious organizational orientation makes one suspicious of this account. More careful examination of the available evidence confirms these suspicions, though alternative accounts must be somewhat speculative. According to the public chronology, a quarantine drawn close to Cuba became effective on Wednesday morning, the first Soviet ship was contacted on Thursday morning, and the crucial operations in the crisis occurred on Friday. According to the statement by the Department of Defense, boarding of the Mareclia by a party from the John F. Kennedy, which occurred on Friday, September 26, 1962, was the first contact. The President ordered, and the accounts report, that "it all be thrown in."

Simple calculations suggest that the blockade line was moved from a position about 10 nautical miles away to about 30 nautical miles away. The Mareclia, the first Soviet ship forced to turn away, had run aground on a reef in the Camaguey area and was therefore able to run aground in a manner that is hard to believe. But according to the official account, "a Soviet tanker arrived in Havana and was hailed by the Navy on the morning of October 26, 1962." Again, simple mathematical calculation excludes the possibility that the Bucharest and the Vinizita were the same ship. It seems probable that the Navy's resistance to the President's order to throw in the Mareclia was based on a calculation of the power of Soviet forces for which McNamara had given a warning. The President forced him to allow one or several Soviet ships to pass through the blockade after it had been officially operative.

This attempt to leave the Navy's blockade had failed. On Wednesday morning, October 26, what the President had been awaiting occurred. The 16 dry cargo ships heading towards the quarantine stopped dead in the water. This was the occasion of Dean Rusk's remark, "We are eyeball to eyeball and I think the other fellow just blinked." But the Navy had another interpretation. The ships had simply stopped to pick up Soviet submarine escorts. The President became quite concerned lest the Navy—already riled because of Presidential meddling in its affairs—blunder into an incident. Sensing the President's fears, McNamara became suspicious of the Navy's procedures and routines for making the first interception. Calling in the Chief of Naval Operations, he warned that the Soviet ship's captain refused to answer questions about his cargo. Picking up the Manual of Navy Regulations, he turned to the section on the code of conduct and shouted, "It's all in there."

Simple calculations suggest that the Pierce must have been stationed along the Navy's original arc which extended 500 miles out to sea from the Cape Magi, Cuba's eastern most tip. The blockade line was not moved as the President ordered, and the accounts report, "It all be thrown in."

What happened is not entirely clear. One can be certain, however, that Soviet ships passed through the line along which American destroyers had posted themselves before the official "first contact" with the Soviet ship. The President was informed on Friday, September 26, 1962, that a Soviet tanker arrived in Havana and was hailed by the Navy on the morning of October 26, 1962."

Schlesinger, op. cit., p. 818.

Ibid.

Sorensen, Kennedy, p. 710.


Ibid., op. cit., p. 171.

For the location of the original arc see Abel, op. cit., p. 141.
account would suffice. But most "issues," e.g., Vietnam or the proliferation of nuclear weapons, emerge piecemeal, over time, one lump in one context, a second in another. Hundreds of issues compete for players' attention every day. Each player is forced to fix upon his issues for that day, fight them on their own terms, and rush on to the next. Thus the character of emerging issues and the pace of their handling are largely conditioned by government "decisions" and "actions" as collages. Choices by one player, outcomes of minor games, outcomes of central games, and "foul-ups"—these pieces, when stuck to the crossbar, constitute government behavior relevant to an issue.

The concept of national security policy as political outcome contradicts both public imagery and academic orthodoxy. Issues vital to national security, it is said, are too important to be settled by political games. They must be "above" politics. To accuse someone of "playing politics with national security" is a most serious charge. What public conviction demands, the academic community and, indeed, national security" is a most serious charge. What public conviction demands, the academic community and, indeed, national security game by occupying a critical position in an administration. For example, in the U.S. government the players include "Chiefs": the President, Secretaries of State, Defense, and Treasury; Director of the CIA; Joint Chiefs of Staff; and "Staffers": the most senior Assistant for National Security Affairs. "Staffers": the immediate staff of each Chief; "Indians": the political appointees and permanent government officials within each of the departments and agencies; and "Ad Hoc Players": actors in the wider government game (especially "Congressional Influentials"), members of the press, spokespersons for important interest groups (especially the "bipartisan foreign policy establishment") in and out of Congress, and surrogates for each of these groups. Other members of the Congress, press, interest groups, and public form concentric circles around the central arena within which the decisional and inter-personal give and take determines the outcomes. The point is that the President restrains the extent to which, and the force with which, he can act alone. The President must consult others. The President's resolution of these conflicts depends not only upon the position, but also upon the player who occupies the position.

For players are also people. Men's metaphors of the bureaucratic politics game mix is personality. How each man manages to stand the heat in his kitchen, each player's basic operating style, and the complementarity or contradiction among permanent and his most "wise" officials in the most enduring pieces of the policy blend. Moreover, each person comes to the party with baggage in tow, including sensitivities to certain issues, commitments to various programs, and ambitions and debts with groups outside the society.

B. Parochial Priorities, Perceptions and Issues. Answers to the questions: What is the issue? and What must be done? are colored by the position from which the questions are considered. For the factors which encourage organizational parochialism also influence the players who occupy positions on top of (or within) these organizations. To motivate members of these organizations, a player must, in a sense, be active and responsive to the organization's orientation. The games into which the player can enter and the advantages with which he plays enhance these pressures. Thus propensities for perceiving and responding from a particular perspective can determine a player's stance in many cases. But these propensities are filtered through the baggage which players bring to positions. Sensitivity to both the pressures and the baggage is thus required for many predictions.

Richard E. Neustadt, Testimony, United States Senate, Committee on Government Operations, Subcommittee on National Security, Ad

ministration of National Security, March 26, 1963, pp. 82-83.
C. Interests, Stakes, and Power. Games are determined by outcomes. But outcomes advance only insofar as each player's conception of the national interest, specific programs to which he is committed, the welfare of his friends, and his personal interests. These overlapping interests constitute the stakes for which games are played. Each player's ability to play success depends upon his power. Power, i.e., effective influence on policy outcomes, is an elusive blend of at least three elements: bargaining advantages (drawn from formal authority and obligations, technical backing, constituency, expertise, and status), skill and will in using bargaining advantages, and other players' perceptions of the first two ingredients. Power wisely invested yields an enhanced reputation for effectiveness. Unsuccessful investment depletes both the stock of capital and the reputation. Thus each player must pick the issues on which he can play with a reasonable probability of success. But no player's power is sufficient to guarantee satisfactory outcomes. Each player's needs and fears run to many other players. What ensues is the most intricate and subtle of games known to man.

1. The Problem and the Problems. "Solutions" to strategic problems are not derived by detached analysts focusing coolly on the problem. Instead, deadlines and events raise issues in games, and demand decisions by busy players in competition to resolve the face of the day and the years. The problems for the players are both narrower and broader than the strategic problem. For each player focuses not on the total strategic problem but rather on the decision that must be made now. Each player's decision has critical consequences not only for the strategic problem but for each player's organizational, reputational, and personal stakes. Thus the gap between the problem the player was solving and the problem upon which the analyst focuses is often very wide.

E. Action-Channels. Bargaining games do not proceed randomly. Action-channels, i.e., regularized ways of engaging action containing types of issues, structure the game by placing the major players, determining their points of entrance into the game, and distributing particular advantages and disadvantages for each game. Action-channels, like the channels that "who's got the action," that is, which department's interests actually do whatever is chosen. Weapon procurement decisions are made within the annual budgeting process; embassies' demands for action cables are answered according to routines of consultation and clearance from State to Defense and White House; requests for instructions from military groups (concerning assistance all the time, concerning operations during war) are composed by the military in consultation with the Office of the Secretary of Defense, State, and White House; crises - how are the stock of capital and the reputation. Thus the annual budgeting process; embassies' decisions, who's got the action," that is, which department builds a coalition of the relevant powers committed to a decision or action, results from which emerged from bargaining among groups with quite different positions and focal- up. Model III's explanatory power is achieved by revealing the pulling and hauling of various players, with different perceptions and priorities, focusing on separate problems, which yielded the outcomes that constitute the action in question. IV. General Propositions

1. Action and Intention. Action does not presuppose intention. The sum of behavior of representatives of a government relevant to an issue was rarely intended by any individual or group. Rather separate individuals with different intentions contributed pieces which compose an outcome distinct from what anyone would have chosen.

2. Where you stand depends on where you sit. Horizontally, the diverse demands upon each player shape his priorities, perceptions, and intentions. For large classes of issues, e.g., budgets and procurement decisions, the stance of a particular player can be predicted with high reliability from information concerning his seat. In the notorious B-36 controversy, no one was surprised by Admiral Radford's testimony that a B-36 is a bad gamble with national security, as opposed to Air Force Secretary Symington's claim that "a B-36 with an A-bomb can destroy distant objectives which might require ground armies today.

3. Chiefs and Indians. The aphorism "where you stand depends on where you sit" has vertical as well as horizontal application. Vertically, the demands upon the President, Chiefs, Staff, and Indians are blended. The foreign policy issues which with the President can deal are limited primarily by his crowded schedule: the necessity of dealing with other issues which might require ground armies years to.

V. Specific Propositions

1. Deterrence. The probability of nuclear attack depends primarily on the probability of attack emerging as an outcome of the bargaining processes. Whether the effective power over action is controlled by an individual, a minor game, or the central game is critical. Second, though Model III's confidence in nuclear deterrence stems from an assertion that, in the end, governments will not commit suicide, Model III relies on historical precedents. Admiral Yamamoto, who did not believe the Japanese attack on Pearl Har­bor, estimated accurately: "In the first six months to a year of war against the U.S. and England I will run wild, and I will show you an uninterrupted succession of victories; I must also be prepared to the fact that, after two or three years, I have no confidence in our ultimate victory." But Japan attacked. Thus, three questions might be considered. One: could any member of the government solve his problem by attack? What patterns of bargaining could yield as an outcome? The major difference between a stable balance of terror and a questionable balance may simply be that in the first case most members of the government...
appreciate fully the consequences of attack and are thus on guard against the emergence of this outcome. Two: what stream of outcomes might lead to an attack? At what point in that stream is the potential attacker's politics? If members of the U.S. government had been sensitive to the stream of decisions from which the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor emerged, they would have been aware of a considerable probability of that attack. In the Cuban missile crisis, analysis, confusion generate foul-ups that yield attack as an outcome? For example, in a crisis or after the beginning of conventional war, what happens to the information available to, and the effective power of, members of the central government? 

THE U.S. BLOCKADE OF CUBA: A THIRD CUT

The Politics of Discovery. A series of overlapping bargaining games determined both the date of the discovery of the Soviet missiles and the impact of this discovery on the Administration. An explanation of the politics of the discovery is consequently a considerable piece of the story. Discovery, in the sense of the U-2 flights, was a success for the Administration. Cubas was the Kennedy Administration's "political Achilles heel." The months preceding the crisis were also months before the Congress, on the House and Senate level, and in the Bipartisan Joint Committee on Foreign Relations and the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence had announced that Cuba would be "the dominant issue of the 1962 campaign." What the administration billed as a "more positive and indirect approach" to Latin America, and had "no specific plan to deal with Castro from developing democratic Latin America," Senators Keating, Goldwater, Capehart, Thurmond, and others attacked as a "do-nothing" policy. In statements on the floor of the House and Senate, campaign speeches distributed across the country, and interviews and articles carried by national news media, Cuba—particularly the Soviet program of increased arms aid—served as a stick for stirring the domestic political scene. 

These attacks drew blood. Prudence demanded a vigorous reaction. The President decided to meet the issue head-on. The Administration mounted a forceful campaign of denial designed to discredit the cooling claims. The President himself manned the front line of this offensive, though almost all Administration officials participated. In his news conference on August 27, President Kennedy said in a typically "irresponsible" call for an invasion of Cuba, stressing rather "the totality of our obligations" and promising to "watch what happens in Cuba with the closest attention." On September 4, he issued a strong statement denying any provocative Soviet action in Cuba. On September 10, he lashed out at "loose talk" calling for an invasion of Cuba. The day before the flight of the U-2 which discovered the missiles, he canceled a trip to Capehart's Indiana against these "self-appointed generals and admirals who want to send someone else's sons to war." On Sunday, October 14, just as a U-2 was taking the first pictures of Soviet missiles, McGeorge Bundy was asserting: "I know that there is no present evidence, and I think that there is no present likelihood that the Cuban government and the Soviet government would, in combination, attempt to install a missile offensive capability." In this campaign to puncture the crisis' charges, the Administration discovered that the public needed positive slogans. Thus, Kennedy fell into a tenuous semantic distinction between "offensive" and "defensive" weapons. This distinction originated in his September 4 statement that there was no evidence of "offensive ground to ground missiles" and warned "that it is otherwise, the gravest issues would arise." His aide, Sandy O'Shea, who had drafted this distinction between "defensive" and "offensive" weapons and announced a firm commitment to act if the Soviet Union attempted to introduce the latter into Cuba, Congressional committees elicited from administration officials testaments in which they distanced this distinction and the President's commitment into the Congressional Record. What the President least wanted to hear, the CIA was most hesitant to say plainly, to the public. On August 22 John McCone met privately with the President and voiced suspicions that the Soviets were preparing to introduce offensive missiles into Cuba. Kennedy heard this as what it was: the suspicion of a hawk. McCone left: "New York Times," August 20, 1962. 


See also Foreign Relations Committee; Senate Armed Services Committee; House Committee on Appropriation; House Select Committee on Export Control. 

A. op. cit., pp. 17-18. According to McCone, he told Kennedy, "The only construction I can put on the material going into Cuba is that the Russians are preparing to introduce offensive missiles." See also Weinstal and Bartlett, op. cit., pp. 60-61. 

San Cristobal area. This area was marked suspicious by the CIA on September 29 and certi­fied top priority on October 3. By October 4 McCone had the evidence required to raise the issue officially. The members of COMOR heard McCone's argument, but were reluctant to make the hard decision he demanded. The significant probability that a U-2 would be downed made oversight of western Cuba a matter of some concern. 

The Politics of Issue. The U-2 photographs presented incontrovertible evidence of Soviet offensive missiles in Cuba. This revelation fell upon political players in a complex context. As one high official recalled, Khrushchev had caught us "with our pants down." What each of the central participants saw, and what each did to cover both his own and the Administration's nakedness, created the spectrum of issues and answers. 

At approximately 9:00 a.m., Tuesday morning, October 16, McGeorge Bundy went to the President's living quarters with the message: "Mr. President, we have the hard photographic evidence that the Russians have offensive mis­siles in Cuba." Much has been made of Ken­dedy's "expression of surprise," "but" "surprise" fails to capture the character of a decision and of what each of the central participants saw, and what each did to cover both his own and the Administration's nakedness, created the spectrum of issues and answers. 

The October 4 COMOR decision to direct a flight over the western end of Cuba in effect "overturned" the September estimate, but without officially raising that issue, The decision represented McCone's victory for which he had lobbied with the President before the September 10 decision, in telegrams before the September 19 estimate, and in person after his return to Washington. Though the politics of the intelligence community were closely guarded, several pieces of the story can be told. By September 27, Colonel Wright and others in DIA believed that the Soviet Union was placing missiles in the 1969 CONCEPTUAL MODELS AND THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS
a diplomatic approach—were the solutions advo-
cated by two of his principal advisors. For Secre-
tary of Defense McNamara, the missiles raised the specter of nuclear war. He first
framed the issue as a straightforward strategic
problem. To understand the issue, one had to
grap two obvious but difficult points. First, the
missiles involved an inevitable narrowing of the
narrowing of the missile gap. It simply hap-
pended sooner rather than later. Second, the
United States could accept this occurrence since
its consequences were minor: "seven-to-one mis-
sile superiority to twenty-one-to-one missile
interiority—the three postures are identical." McNamara's statement of
this argument at the first meeting of the ExCom
was summed up in the phrase, "a missile is
a missile."112 It makes no great difference, he
maintained, "whether you are killed by a missile
from the Soviet Union or Cuba."113 The im-
lication was clear. The United States should not
initiate a crisis with the Soviet Union, risking a
significant probability of nuclear war over an
occurrence which had such small strategic implica-
tions.

The perceptions of McGeorge Bundy, the
President's Assistant for National Security Af-
fairs, are the most difficult of all to reconstruct.
There is no question that he initially argued for a
diplomatic track.114 But was Bundy laboring un-
der an acknowledged burden of responsibility
in Cuba? Or was he playing the role of de-
vil's advocate in order to make the President
probe his own initial reaction and consider other
options?

The President's brother, Robert Kennedy, saw
most clearly the political wall against which
Khrushchev had backed the President. But he,
like McNamara, saw the prospect of nuclear
doom. Was Khrushchev going to force the Presi-
dent to an insane act? At the first meeting of
the ExCom, he scribbled a note, "Now I know
how Tojo felt when he was planning Pearl Har-
bor."115 From the outset he searched for an al-
terative that would prevent the air strike.

The initial reaction of Theodore Sorensen, the
President's Special Counsel and "alter ego," fell
somewhere between that of the President and
Bundy. Khrushchev's deceitful move demanded a strong
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required as a first step is non-casual examination of the present product: inspection of existing explanations, articulation of the conceptual models employed in producing them, formulation of the propositions relied upon, specification of the logic of the various intellectual enterprises, and reflection on the questions being asked. Though it is difficult to overemphasize the need for more systematic processing of more data, these preliminary matters of formulating questions with clarity and specificity to categories and assumptions, from the fruitfulness of larger quantities of data is possible are still a major hurdle in considering most important problems.

Third, the preliminary, partial paradigms present several problems. Each corresponds to a strategy to the construction of many problems of foreign and military policy. Model II and Model III cuts at problems typically treated in Model I terms can permit significant improvements in explanation and prediction. Full Model II and III analyses require large amounts of information. But even in cases where the information base is severely limited, improvements are possible. Consider the problem of predicting Soviet strategic forces. In the mid-1950s, Model I style calculations led to forecasts that the Soviets would rapidly deploy large numbers of long-range bombers. From a Model II perspective, both the frustality of the Air Force within the Soviet military establishment, and the relaxation of the security constraints on the parameters of rational choice (as in variants of Model I) analysts can construct a large number of accounts of any act as a rational choice. But does a statement of reasons why an actor chose to do something constitute an explanation of the occurrence of that action? How can Model I analysis be forced to make more systematic contributions to the question of the determinants of occurrences? Model III explanation of events in terms of world system, a world is contiguous, but governments sometimes make sharp departures. Can an organizational process model be modified to suggest that the rival strategic forces were controlled by the Soviet Ground Forces rather than an independent Service, and in the later period, this would have necessitated massive shifts in budgetary strategy. Many "scientists of the sort attacked by Bull adopt the second, this third posture is relatively neutral with respect to whatever is in substantive dispute. See Heddy Bull, "International Theory: The Old and New" World Politics (April, 1965); and Morton Kaplan, "The New Great Debate: Traditionalism vs. Science in International Relations," World Politics (October, 1965).

44 A number of problems are now being examined in these terms both in the Bureaucracy Study Group on Bureaucracy and Policy of the Institute of Politics at Harvard University and at the Rand Corporation.

spites. Today, Model I considerations lead many analysts both to recommend that an agreement not to deploy ABMs be a major American objective in upcoming strategic negotiations with the USSR, and to predict success. From a Model II vantage point, the existence of an ongoing strategic arms race, the strength of the organization (National Air Defense) that controls ABMs, and the fact that an agreement to stop ABM deployment would force the virtual dismantling of this organization, make a viable negotiation of this sort much less likely. Model III cut suggests that (a) there must be significant differences among perceptions and priorities of Soviet leaders over strategic negotiations, (b) any agreement will affect some players' pay-off bases, and (c) agreements that do not require extensive cuts in the sources of some major players' power will prove easier to negotiate and more viable.

Fourth, the present formulation of paradigms is simply an initial step. As such it leaves a long list of critical questions unanswered. Given any action, an imaginative analyst should always be able to construct some rationale for the government's move, and relax any of the already relaxed constraints on the numbers of any account of any act as a rational choice. But does a statement of reasons why an actor chose to do something constitute an explanation of the occurrence of that action? How can Model I analysis be forced to make more systematic contributions to the question of the determinants of occurrences? Model III explanation of events in terms of rational action is explanation. But its complexity is enormous, the information requirements are often overwhelming, and many of the details of the bargaining may be superfluous. How can such a model be made empirically testable? Model II tells a fascinating "story." But its complexity is enormous, the information requirements are often overwhelming, and many of the details of the bargaining may be superfluous. How can such a model be made empirically testable?

In response to several readers' recommendations, what follows is reproduced without alteration from the paper delivered at the September, 1968 Association for the Study of National Organizations and Policies, the Rand Corporation (Rand P-3918). The discussion is heavily indebted to Ernest R. May.


In 1969 CONCEPTUAL MODELS AND THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS

strategic cost-benefit balance is negative, is true. Nations rarely surrender when they are winning. The proposition specifies a range within which nations surrender. But over this broad range, the relevant question is: why do nations surrender?

Models II and III focus upon the government machine through which this fact about the international strategic marketplace must be filtered to predict surrender. These models are considerably less sensitive to the possibility of a surrender at the point that the cost-benefit calculus turns negative. Never in history (i.e., in none of the five cases I have examined) have nations surrendered at that point. Surrender occurs sometime thereafter. When depends on the process of organizations and politics of players within these governments as they are affected by the opposing government. Moreover, the efforts of the victorious power's action upon the surrendering nation cannot be adequately summarized as increasing or decreasing strategic costs. Imposing additional costs by bombing a nation may increase the probability of surrender. But there is no appreciation of the impact of the acts of one nation upon another thus required some understanding of the machine which is being influenced. For more precision in prediction, Models II and III require consideration of more than formal organizations and politics of North Vietnam that is publicly available. On the basis of the limited public information, however, these models can be suggestive.

Model II examines two sub-problems. First, to have lost is not sufficient. The government must know that the strategic cost-benefit calculus is negative. But neither the categories, nor the indicators of strategic costs and benefits are clear. And the sources of information are not both are organizations whose parochial priorities and perceptions do not facilitate accurate information or estimation. Military evaluation of the relevant question is: why do nations surrender. But over any agreement will affect some players' pay-off bases, and (c) agreements that do not require extensive cuts in the sources of some major players' power will prove easier to negotiate and more viable.

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the acts of other organisations, e.g., the fighting forces, creating contradictory "signals" to the victor.

Model III suggests that surrender will not come at the point that strategic costs outweigh benefits, but that it will not wait until the leadership group concludes that the war is lost. Rather, the problem is better understood in terms of four additional propositions. First, strong advocates of the war effort, whose careers are closely identified with the war, rarely come to the conclusion that costs outweigh benefits. Second, quite often from the outset of a war, a number of members of the government (particularly those whose responsibilities sensitize them to problems other than war, e.g., economic planners or intelligence experts) are convinced that the war effort is futile. Third, surrender is likely to come as the result of a political shift that enhances the effective power of the latter group (and adds swing members to it). Fourth, the course of the war, particularly actions of the victor, can influence the advantages and disadvantages of players in the loser's government. Thus, North Vietnam will surrender not when its leaders have a change of heart, but when Hanoi has a change of leaders (or a change of effective power within the central circle). How U.S. bombing (or pause), threats, promises, or action in the South affect the game in Hanoi is subtle but nonetheless crucial.

That these three models could be applied to the surrender of governments other than North Vietnam should be obvious. But that exercise is left for the reader.

A TRANSACTIONAL THEORY OF POLITICAL INTEGRATION AND ARMS CONTROL

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Nominally, the English became a nation in the eighth century but did not achieve political integration until the seventeenth century, a thousand years later. During the millennium, the English "nation" was the scene of recurring internal wars, the last ending with the acceptance of the Bill of Rights by William III and Mary in 1688. What was the process leading to cessation in the use of armed conflict as a technique of domestic politics in England?

Nominally, Mexico was an independent nation in 1821 but did not see the end of its internal wars until the 1940's. What political process led to domestic "arms control" in Mexico?

Although taking place in different centuries and in nations with distinct political cultures, were there common elements in two transitions to internal arms control? What were critical factors in the integrative process? May the same factors, or analogous ones, be identified and controlled in contemporary efforts related to regional and international arms control? What may be learned from the English, the Mexican, and other national cases that is generalizable to the problem of international political integration and arms control?

The present theory sketch views arms control as an aspect of the integration of political organisations. Political integration, in turn, is the consequence of a process of political transactions among principal political actors over time. In keeping with numerous contemporary conceptions of social transaction, political "things" of one kind or another are exchanged between actors when both (or more) parties perceive or anticipate a "profit," that is, applying their own individual criteria, see a net gain when measuring what is received against what is given up in the transaction. In order to quantify and relate these transactional events to the process leading to political integration, three types of "currency" are postulated: positional, decisional, and material currencies. These types are employed in the analysis of the content of each political transaction. The following general hypotheses are then proposed:

1. Successive transactions perceived as profitable by all parties tend to reinforce attitudes of trust among political transactors.
2. Trust among political transactors is positively correlated with sharp increases in the inclusion of decisional currencies among the content of transactions.
3. Increased trust is positively associated with the decline in political exchanges involving armaments (a sub-type of material currency), that is, increasing trust and decreasing violent warfare are positively correlated.
4. Transactional sequences that follow a trust-inducing pattern tend to be associated with successful transition from unintegrated to integrated states of political organisation.

*The distinction between "disarmament" and "arms control" is significant. Neither England nor Mexico, for example, is a domestically disarmed nation. Rather, as a consequence of the processes to be examined with this theory, each nation—as others that are politically integrated—has established a monopoly of its major means of internal violence. Domestic peace, that is, the cessation of internal wars, seems to be associated with conditions of arms control (involving decisional currency exchanges) rather than disarmament.

"Political development" and "political integration" are also troublesome terms that should not delay us long. Since World War II, the rubric "political development" has tended to be employed mainly to describe comparative studies of national modernisation, particularly with respect to the growth of economic organisation and governmental bureaucracies. Overviews of current usages are reported in Samuel P. Huntington, "Political Development and Political Decay," World Politics, 17 (April, 1965), 386-430; Fred W. Riggs, "The Theory of Political Development," in J. C. Charlesworth (ed.), Contemporary Political Analysis (New York: The Free Press 1967), pp. 317-340; Robert T. Holt and John E. Turner, The Political Basis of Economic Development (Princeton, N.J.: D. Van Nostrand, 1968). The approach described in this report is "developmental" simply in its search for recurring tendencies.